

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

SP-02 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SS-15 /086 W

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R 021359Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6074

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENNA 5706

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AU

SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN OCTOBER: PART II - ISSUES

REF: VIENNA 2050

SUMMARY: BREAD AND BUTTER ISSUES OF JOB SECURITY AND CONTINUING INFLATION ARE DOMINANT ONES IN AUSTRIAN NATIONAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN, WITH ALL PARTIES OFFERING HEALING ECONOMIC NOSTRUMS. LEADERSHIP ISSUE IS IMPORTANT ONE; SOCIALISTS (SPO) CLAIM CHANCELLOR KREISKY IS PROVEN TOP PERFORMER WHILE OPPOSITION PEOPLE'S PARTY (OVP) SAYS IT HAS BETTER TOP TEAM. ISSUES OF CORRUPTION AND MIS-MANAGEMENT IN GOVERNMENT, MEDIA REFORM AND BURGEONING SOCIAL WELFARE COSTS SEEM TO HAVE LITTLE VOTER APPEAL. FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENSE RECEIVING SCANT ATTENTION FROM OPPOSITION PARTIES, GIVEN KREISKY'S HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL OPTICAL PERSONIFICATION OF AUSTRIAN FOREIGN POLICY. CONTROVERSY OF SPEEDIER CONSTRUCTION OF AUTOBAHN IN SOUTHERN AUSTRIA COULD BE SLEEPER ISSUE IN CAMPAIGN. END SUMMARY.

1. ECONOMIC ISSUES OVERRIDING. EXISTING MOOD OF UN-  
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CERTAINTY AND CONCERN AMONG VOTING PUBLIC OVER ECONOMIC

TRENDS HAS PUSHED ECONOMIC ISSUES OF MAINTAINING FULL  
EMPLOYMENT AND CHECKING INFLATION TO FOREFRONT OF  
ELECTION CAMPAIGN. RULING SOCIALISTS ARE TRYING TO MAIN-  
TAIN AIR OF CONFIDENCE ON ECONOMY'S PERFORMANCE AND ON  
GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO CONTROL SITUATION. SOCIALISTS  
ARE HOWEVER EMB@C84A)A\_DWW DB""\*?!J6MT|2/N"<>  
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CW-H#8-\*D"QK;4925JK;?+W(\$BT<QUX\$RGZ4QH/\_61-WKRARZ>1-QGZ A;FGJT  
?+W!"6P5\$ Y-[K#H@7UCR !8)-H9GWM9\*0U+1\$)K\*ZRHJ?+R6\_"WEDDJJ:/WH!AA@A)PJ  
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2A,<#R  
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2A,G<H)W(D\_QQW  
GA:  
CFAHX& G>AG@ Y)P91PEP<47  
+/DA<FDA#QP 7W4\_ (CFU  
QA-;9QJC%NT,\*AW+JWA-;K1\_"6Q CRF-1UJ8@.FA "LI  
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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

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OR EARLY 1976.

6. POLITICAL ISSUES OF MINOR INTEREST. EFFORT BY OPPOSITION PARTIES TO PLACE STIGMA ON SOCIALISTS OF CORRUPTION AND MISMANAGEMENT IN GOVERNMENT IS HAVING ONLY MARGINAL SUCCESS, IN SPITE OF MASSIVE COST OVERRUNS AND QUESTIONABLE FINANCIAL PRACTICES IN CONNECTION WITH HUGE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS OF VIENNA HOSPITAL, "UN CITY" AND DANUBE ISLAND COMPLEX. NATURE OF AUSTRIAN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEM ("SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP") AND WEAKNESS OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA PRECLUDE EFFECTIVE AIRING OF THESE ISSUES. RADIO-T.V. REFORM, WHICH CARRIED OUT BY SOCIALISTS IN 1974 OVER HEATED OBJECTIONS OF OPPOSITION PARTIES, HAS ALSO LOST SOME VOTER APPEAL AS CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE.

7. FOREIGN DEFENSE POLICY: STRONG SUIT OF SOCIALISTS.

FOREIGN POLICY HAS VERY LIMITED POTENTIAL OF BECOMING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE IN CAMPAIGN, GIVEN KREISKY'S OPTICAL SUCCESSES IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA. NEVERTHELESS, SOCIALISTS ARE PLACING HEAVY STRESS ON AUSTRIA'S "INCREASED IMPORTANCE" IN WORLD AS RESULT OF KREISKY'S STATESMANSHIP. DEFENSE POLICY IS ALSO UNLIKELY TO DEVELOP INTO CONTRO-  
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VERSIAL ELECTION ISSUE, SINCE ONLY VIABLE ALTERNATIVE WHICH OPPOSITION PARTIES COULD PUT FORWARD WOULD INVOLVE DEMAND FOR CREATION OF MORE EFFECTIVE DEFENSE FORCES. LATTER APPROACH WOULD, HOWEVER, REQUIRE FINANCIAL AND PERSONAL SACRIFICES OF CITIZENRY, BOTH OF WHICH ARE CURRENTLY ANATHEMA TO AUSTRIAN VOTERS.

8. CONSTRUCTION OF SOUTH AUTOBAHN: POSSIBLE SLEEPER ISSUE. CONTROVERSY OVER SPEEDIER CONSTRUCTION OF SOUTH AUTOBAHN, WHICH COULD BECOME SERIOUS VOTER THREAT TO SOCIALISTS, MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE SLEEPER ISSUE IN CAMPAIGN. MASS CIRCULATION VIENNA DAILY HAS MOUNTED CAMPAIGN FOR QUICK ACTION ON ISSUE AND SOCIALIST FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FINDS ITSELF OBJECT OF PUBLIC WRATH AND OUTCRY. SOCIALISTS ARE CONCERNED THAT VACATIONERS RETURNING FROM MEDITERRANEAN REGION TO AUSTRIA IN LATE AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER, WHEN AGAIN BESET WITH TRAFFIC JAMS ALONG INADEQUATE HIGHWAYS THROUGH SOUTHERN AUSTRIA, WILL TAKE OUT THEIR FRUSTRATIONS ON SOCIALISTS ONELECTION DAY.BUCHANAN

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** NATIONAL ELECTIONS, ELECTION CAMPAIGNS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 02 JUL 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 75 VIENNA 2050  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:** ANOMALY  
**Review Date:** 01 APR 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <01 APR 2003 by Izenbel0>; APPROVED <02 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** AUSTRIAN NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN OCTOBER: PART II - ISSUES  
**TAGS:** PINT, AU  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006